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ABSTRACT

This study determined whether or not there were significant differences between ratings of parents and teachers on the Adaptive Behavior Scale, Public School Version. Interviews with parents of approximately 150 white and Spanish-surnamed children from 7 to 12 years assigned to educable mentally retarded (EMR) classes were used in conjunction with data from the 1972 feasibility and standardization study of the scale. Sex, ethnic status, and rator (parent or teacher) were considered in the analysis of differences between parent and teacher ratings. The results demonstrated that parent and teacher ratings of white and Spanish-surnamed children assigned to EMR classes were not significantly different. Furthermore, sex and ethnic status of the children did not affect the ratings. These results imply that pupils assigned to EMR classes function similarly at home and at school. (Author/BW)

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Field Study of the Efficacy of the AAMD Adaptive Behavior Scale - Public School Version

Teachers and Parents as Reporters of the Adaptive Behavior of Public School Children

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Substudy 3 of 5

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Teachers and Parents as Reporters of Adaptive Behavior Functioning of Public School Children

Abstract

The purpose of this sub study was to determine whether there were significant differences between ratings of parents and teachers on the AAMD Adaptive Behavior Scale, Public School Version. Parent and teacher ratings of white and Spanish surnamed EMR children were compared and no significant differences were found. In all comparisons, sex and ethnic status did not contribute significantly to the ratings. The conclusion follows that parents as well as teachers can contribute information on the adaptive behavior functioning of children in public schools. When differences between their ratings are found, users of the Scale should explore differences in home and school environmental demands and opportunities for development of adaptive behavior skills. On the basis of these findings, one can tentatively conclude that there will not be significant differences between the average ratings assigned by parents and teachers to the domain scores of white and Spanish-surnamed children on the AAMD Adaptive Behavior Scale.

Foreward

The study reported here was part of a program of research in Special Education by Nadine M. Lambert.

The study was carried out during the academic year 1976-1977 under the auspices of the Special Education Research Program supported by Grant No. 76-62-G between the State Department of Education and Nadine M. Lambert.

The report of this sub study is reproduced here in this form for distribution as a technical report under the Grant, and in order to make complete findings available for others engaged in this research area. Results of this study are the sole responsibility of the investigators. Official endorsement of the California State Department of Education is not implied.

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Background

Many critics of special education programs in the public schools have argued that the school has not been able to distinguish between the "six hour retardate" and the truly retarded child. As a consequence of this failure, many children have been labeled and placed in special education programs inappropriately. The "six hour retardate" is commonly defined as one whose "retardation" is manifest only in the public school setting; hence he or she functions at a retarded level only during school hours. Critics also charged that performance on individual intelligence tests (or the IQ) was the only criterion used for determining that special placement in EMR classes was necessary and no attention was paid to the child's social competence. As a consequence of these charges, the Federal Court in San Francisco intervened in the school's evaluation process by requiring strict adherence to due process procedures and directing the schools to include more than an intelligence test score in the diagnosis of mental retardation.

This study undertook the examination of differences between parent and teacher adaptive behavior ratings of children assigned to EMR classes. Since many critics have claimed that the differences would be greatest when parents and teachers rated children from rural environments, the sample of subjects included both urban and rural white and Spanish-surnamed pupils who were assigned to EMR classes. If significant differences between parent and teacher ratings were found, the results would support the "six hour retardate" assumption. On the other hand, if no differences were found, the conclusion would follow that the adaptive behavior functioning of EMR children at home and at school is at a similar level and that the assumption that EMR children are "six hour retardates" is not tenable.

Objectives

The objective of this substudy was to determine the extent to which public school children in EMR classes could be considered "six hour retardates." To accomplish this objective ratings of teachers and parents of the same children were collected, and then the ratings were compared to evaluate the extent to which the children were described similarly in the home and school environments. In addition, we determined whether sex or the ethnic status of the child was a factor which resulted in differences between parent and teacher ratings.

Significant differences in the adaptive behavior ratings of boys and girls from two environments, belonging to two ethnic groups would indicate the presence of differing demands for adaptation as a consequence of the particular social setting. Based on Mercer's work, it was expected that parents would rate children more poorly in the areas of self-help (Part One) and personal and social responsibility, while teachers would rate children as having more problems in emotional control (Part Two). Additionally, we explored the extent to which there were differing expectations (as inferred from differences between ratings) at home and at school for EMR boys and girls from white and Spanish-surnamed backgrounds.

The hypotheses which were tested in this study were:

1. Mean scores of EMR children rated by teachers and parents would show the following significant relationships:

Part One: Parents < Teachers

Part Two: Parents < Teachers

2. Differences between teacher and parent ratings would be in the same direction regardless of sex and ethnic status.

Procedure

Subjects

The data for this study were collected as part of the feasibility and standardization study of the AAMD Adaptive Behavior Scale conducted by the Department of Education at the University of California, Berkeley during the Spring of 1972. Interviews with parents of approximately 150 white and Spanish-surnamed children from seven to 12 years assigned to EMR classes from several of the participating school districts provided the subjects for this study.

Data Analysis

A nested, multivariate analysis of variance design was utilized to analyze the data. The following independent variables were considered in the analysis of differences between parent and teacher ratings of adaptive behavior: (a) sex, (b) ethnic status, and (c) rater - parent or teacher. The small sample size prohibited analysis of the teacher-parent sample by age.

The dependent variables were the 21 domain scores from Part One and Part Two of the Adaptive Behavior Scale - Public School Version, 1974 Revision. Domain scores were derived from the sums of the item values comprising that domain.

Post hoc comparisons using Roy's test provided a procedure to appraise the significance and directionality of differences and Omega^2 was calculated to estimate the percent of explained variance attributed to each significant domain difference.

Results

Effects of Parents and Teachers as Raters of Adaptive Behavior

The effects of rater were tested in a nested design. Rater was nested

within race and sex of the child. Teacher/parent rating were nested within white male, white female, Spanish male, and Spanish female. The mean scores for each group are presented on Table 1. The MANOVA results for these comparisons are displayed on Tables 2, 3, and 4. With only three exceptions, the results of these tests were not significant. These exceptions were: the teachers of Spanish females rated them as having more eccentric habits on Part Two; teachers rated white males as being more rebellious and antisocial. There were no significant differences between parent and teacher ratings on the domains of Part One.

When the main effects attributable to sex and ethnic status were examined alone, there were no significant differences. Table 5 presents the mean sex differences and Table 6 presents ethnic status differences. Tables 7 and 8 display the MANOVA results for these comparisons.

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate that parent and teacher ratings of white and Spanish-surnamed children assigned to EMR classes were not significantly different. Furthermore sex and ethnic status of the children did not affect the ratings.

The implication of the findings of essentially no difference between adaptive behavior ratings by parents and teachers is that pupils assigned to EMR classes function similarly at home and at school. Both parents and teachers noticed impairments in adaptive behavior functioning of these children and rated them similarly. We should caution the reader that the generalizability of these results is limited to EMR children from these two ethnic groups. There is clearly a need to investigate ratings of black EMR children by their parents and teachers and to replicate these findings.

Conclusion

The assessment of adaptive behavior was introduced originally in order to reduce the incidence of "six hour retardates" in the public school EMR classification. The findings from this study showed that the adaptive behavior of EMR white and Spanish-surnamed children was judged similarly by parents and teachers; therefore the conclusion that these EMR children were six-hour retardates was not tenable.

When ratings between parents and teachers differ, psychologists must explore aspects of the environmental demands of the home and the school which might affect differences in functioning. The Public School Version of the AAMD Adaptive Behavior Scale can provide an assessment of the adaptive behavior functioning of children in both home and school environments. Though the standardization data are based on ratings by teachers, adaptive behavior ratings by parents can provide important supplemental evidence of the quality of the child's functioning in school.

Table 1

Mean Scores for Teacher/Parent Comparisons by the Race and Sex of Child

Domain	Teacher				Parent			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	White N=59	Spanish N=23	White N=26	Spanish N=12	White N=59	Spanish N=23	White N=26	Spanish N=12
Part One								
Independent functioning	58.49	62.35	63.00	60.25	60.41	60.87	61.23	69.08
Physical development	22.64	22.83	22.50	22.33	22.39	22.74	21.38	23.50
Economic activity	6.72	6.35	5.42	6.42	7.64	7.30	6.35	8.75
Language development	29.00	27.44	27.23	29.67	28.44	27.26	28.73	00.17
Number/time concepts	9.10	8.30	8.88	8.84	8.66	6.83	8.15	8.50
Vocational activity	6.83	6.78	6.56	6.75	6.64	4.65	6.42	4.07
Self-direction	12.81	12.91	12.46	14.58	13.88	14.57	14.50	14.83
Responsibility	3.63	3.83	4.00	4.17	3.51	3.30	3.92	4.42
Socialization	19.15	18.74	19.46	20.75	18.56	17.48	19.31	20.17
Part Two								
Destructive behavior	5.05	3.52	1.91	3.50	5.47	4.43	4.77	2.42
Anti-social behavior	11.85	10.22	5.31	10.17	9.97	7.22	9.27	5.25
Rebellious behavior	9.34	7.87	4.92	6.43	7.36	7.83	5.46	2.58
Untrustworthy	3.00	2.96	1.92	2.17	3.25	1.57	2.65	.67
Withdrawal	2.08	1.43	2.96	2.25	1.76	.87	1.81	1.41
Odd behavior	1.15	.96	.42	.83	1.32	1.43	1.50	.41
Odd mannerisms	.49	.52	.50	.58	.61	.74	.73	.17
Vocal habits	1.41	1.0	.81	1.25	1.17	1.26	1.31	.83
Eccentric habits	1.56	1.04	1.46	1.75	1.78	3.52	1.38	.50
Hyperactivity	1.85	1.78	.62	1.83	1.90	2.61	1.35	1.58
Psychological disturbances	8.75	8.09	8.27	7.50	11.22	8.00	10.37	6.42
Medication	.41	.26	.19	0	.39	.35	.31	0

Table 2

Multivariate Analysis of Variance for Teacher/Parent Comparison: White Males

Variable	Hypothesis mean square	Univariate F
	d.f. = 21 and 212	
Independent functioning	366.83	3.09
Physical development	.37	.06
Economic activity	29.98	2.29
Language development	56.48	1.36
Number/time concepts	.85	.12
Vocational activity	1.54	.10
Self-direction	2.24	.16
Responsibility	2.51	1.40
Socialization	1.72	.11
Destructive behavior	189.82	5.94
Anti-social behavior	771.85	8.63*
Rebellious behavior	351.92	6.36*
Untrustworthy behavior	20.83	1.72
Withdrawal	13.87	1.72
Odd behavior	9.60	2.32
Odd mannerisms	.00	.00
Vocal habits	6.48	1.73
Eccentric habits	.17	.02
Hyperactivity	27.40	5.01
Psychological disturbances	4.10	.07
Medication	.83	1.25

Note. Degrees of freedom for hypothesis = 1; degrees of freedom for error = 232.

*$p < .01$.

Table 3

Multivariate Analysis of Variance for Teacher/Parent Comparison: White Females

Variable	Hypothesis mean square	Univariate F*
	d.f. = 21 and 212	
Independent functioning	12.25	.10
Physical Development	18.24	2.68
Economic Activity	30.40	2.32
Language development	1.52	.04
Number/time concepts	4.64	.68
Vocational activity	.88	.06
Self-direction	6.91	.49
Responsibility	3.10	1.74
Socialization	10.11	.66
Destructive behavior	8.98	.28
Anti-social behavior	8.76	.10
Rebellious behavior	64.77	1.17
Untrustworthy behavior	6.51	.54
Withdrawal	.04	.00
Odd behavior	.57	.13
Odd mannerisms	.26	.13
Vocal habits	.34	.09
Eccentric habits	2.82	.30
Hyperactivity	5.50	1.01
Psychological disturbances	13.79	.22
Medication	.12	.18

Note. Degrees of freedom for hypothesis = 1; degress of freedom for error = 232.

*None significant with $p < .01$.

Table 4

Multivariate Analysis of Variance for Teacher/Parent Comparison: Spanish Females

Variable	Hypothesis mean square	Univariate F
	d.f. = 21 and 212	
Independent functioning	532.02	4.48
Physical development	4.57	.67
Economic activity	16.48	1.26
Language development	66.58	1.60
Number/time concepts	22.10	3.24
Vocational activity	1.86	.12
Self-direction	.57	.04
Responsibility	9.76	5.48
Socialization	56.99	3.74
Destructive behavior	32.12	1.01
Anti-social behavior	30.52	.34
Rebellious behavior	216.75	3.91
Untrustworthy behavior	6.37	.53
Withdrawal	2.36	.29
Odd behavior	8.17	1.98
Odd mannerisms	2.58	1.25
Vocal habits	1.44	.38
Eccentric habits	72.00	7.65*
Hyperactivity	8.29	1.52
Psychological disturbances	19.77	.31
Medication	.95	1.44

Note. Degrees of freedom for hypothesis = 1; degrees of freedom for error = 232.

*$p < .01$.

Table 5

Mean Scores by Sex for Teacher/Parent Comparison

Domain	Sex	
	Male (N = 164)	Female (N = 76)
Part One		
Independent functioning	60.05	62.92
Physical development	22.59	22.25
Economic activity	7.08	6.42
Language development	28.33	28.59
Number/time concepts	8.51	8.57
Vocational activity	6.46	6.16
Self-direction	13.46	13.87
Responsibility	3.57	4.07
Socialization	18.65	19.72
Part Two		
Destructive behavior	4.90	3.18
Anti-social behavior	10.29	7.42
Rebellious behavior	8.21	4.97
Untrustworthy behavior	2.88	2.01
Withdrawal	1.71	2.21
Odd behavior	1.23	.86
Odd mannerisms	.57	.54
Vocal habits	1.25	1.05
Eccentric behavior	1.84	1.32
Hyperactivity	1.96	1.21
Psychological disturbances	9.44	8.57
Medication	.37	.17

Table 6

Mean Scores by Ethnic Status for Teacher/Parent Comparison

Domain	Ethnic status: White (N = 170)	Ethnic status: Spanish surname (N = 70)
Part One		
Independent functioning	60.26	62.66
Physical development	22.34	22.83
Economic activity	6.78	7.09
Language development	28.49	28.22
Number/time concepts	8.77	7.94
Vocational activity	6.66	6.63
Self-direction	13.39	14.07
Responsibility	3.69	3.81
Socialization	19.02	19.91
Part Two		
Destructive behavior	4.66	3.63
Anti-social behavior	9.80	8.37
Rebellious behavior	7.38	6.70
Untrustworthy behavior	2.87	1.97
Withdrawal	2.06	1.38
Odd behavior	1.15	1.00
Odd mannerisms	.57	.54
Vocal habits	1.21	1.12
Eccentric behavior	1.59	1.88
Hyperactivity	1.60	2.03
Psychological disturbances	9.78	7.67
Medication	.35	.20

Table 7

Multivariate Analysis of Variance for Teacher/Parent Comparison: Sex

Variable	Hypothesis mean square d.f. = 21 and 212	Univariate F*
Independent functioning	154.38	1.30
Physical development	.23	.03
Economic activity	72.64	5.55
Language development	4.40	.11
Number/time concepts	24.42	3.58
Vocational activity	69.02	4.52
Self-direction	68.83	4.87
Responsibility	.60	.34
Socialization	18.42	1.21
Destructive behavior	28.36	.89
Anti-social behavior	93.47	1.04
Rebellious behavior	77.70	1.40
Untrustworthy behavior	9.97	.82
Withdrawal	22.67	2.81
Odd behavior	4.69	1.14
Odd mannerisms	.06	.03
Vocal habits	.00	.00
Eccentric habits	5.16	.55
Hyperactivity	5.05	.92
Psychological disturbances	31.37	.51
Medication	.09	.14

Note. Degrees of freedom for hypothesis = 1; degrees of freedom for error = 232.

*None significant at $p < .01$.

Table 8

Multivariate Analysis of Variance for Teacher/Parent Comparison: Ethnic Status

Variable	Hypothesis mean square	Univariate F
	d.f. = 21 and 212	
Independent functioning	243.59	2.05
Physical development	16.88	2.48
Economic activity	19.91	1.52
Language development	3.48	.08
Number/time concepts	14.99	2.20
Vocational activity	45.78	3.00
Self-direction	28.78	2.04
Responsibility	1.18	.66
Socialization	1.17	.08
Destructive behavior	28.61	.90
Anti-social behavior	34.37	.38
Rebellious behavior	15.59	.28
Untrustworthy behavior	33.16	2.74
Withdrawal	19.21	2.38
Odd behavior	1.57	.37
Odd mannerisms	.28	.14
Vocal habits	.19	.05
Eccentric habits	1.09	.12
Hyperactivity	12.11	2.21
Psychological disturbances	201.90	3.26
Medication	1.30	1.96

Note. Degrees of freedom for hypothesis = 1; degrees of freedom for error = 232.

*None significant at $p < .01$.